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ABSTRACT

An examination of International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) activities since the adoption of the 1976 statutes reveals a globally expanding and dynamic organization using its membership of 139 associations to foster and promote library services and international library cooperation; however, no provision has been made for the national library associations to share their concerns about the management of both human and financial resources. Associations in developing and developed nations have problems, albeit differing in nature and magnitude, associated with the objectives of any professional organization: protection of the public using the members' professional services, promotion of professional activities, reaction to members' concerns, organization and administration of the associations, and operation as an advocate for professional services. It is recommended to the executive board that a Round Table on the Management of Library Associations be established within IFLA, for the purpose of providing a forum for those managing library associations to discuss common problems and issues facing these organizations. The membership should be open to representatives responsible for executive functions in library associations and institutions that are members of IFLA. (RAA)

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FEASIBILITY OF AN IFLA ROUND TABLE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

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"The name of the association shall be: INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS, designated by the acronym IFLA ...". "The Federation shall be an independent international non-governmental association .... whose purposes shall be to promote international understanding, co-operation, discussion, research and development in all fields of library activity including bibliography, information services and the education of personnel and to provide a body through which librarianship can be represented in matters of international interests." I quote from IFLA's new Statutes adopted in Lausanne in 1976.

IFLA has undertaken these tasks. In many areas it has undertaken them with commendable efficiency. For instance, relations with Unesco and FID on the international scene are much improved. In areas of practice much has been done in the UBC and UAP programmes and in connection with audio-visual materials, children's libraries, library buildings, art libraries and in other areas of professional practice and activity that are far too numerous to mention here. These have been selected simply to serve as examples. Yet these areas of activity are concerned, for the most part, with services from library and information services to the users. They have helped, commendably, to improve the quality and range of these services. Yet IFLA's title is the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Here we must stop to ask ourselves the question: "What does

IFLA do, not for library and information services, but for these associations and institutions as organisations forming its membership? What do these associations, *qua* organisations, get from membership of IFLA?

The 1980 Directory numbers 139 library associations as national association members in 85 countries. Without these institutions IFLA would not have come into being. They form the large majority of members contributing the subscriptions without which IFLA could not exist. They are the channels by which individual librarians' expertise is fed into policy-formulation and activities undertaken by IFLA to improve library and information services throughout the world. They are the agencies for change that provide the machinery whereby IFLA's policies are executed and put into practice in individual nations. The answer to the question therefore must be - very little. Associations serve as inputs into, and benefactors of, IFLA rather than as recipients. What then ought IFLA to be undertaking for these organisations? Is there anything that IFLA can do? This paper will attempt to suggest what this should be.

It is a discussion document in that it hopes to encourage discussion. It is a preparatory paper in that it is preparing some thoughts in an area within IFLA hardly yet considered. It is investigative in that it is seeking to investigate this meeting's response and obtain views for the Professional and Executive Boards. Although this year's Conference is accompanied by no Council meetings, support for a proposal from this meeting would guide the Professional and Executive Boards in their deliberations on the subject. The paper therefore will suggest an area where IFLA may not be fully and adequately meeting members' requirements. It will give some indication of what requirements it is thought IFLA will need to meet, examining them from the point of view of associations and institutions in the so-called "industrialised" countries and those in the area of the globe.

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known - for want of a better word - as the "developing world". It will recommend an organisational development that IFLA might consider undertaking. It will suggest some objectives which any proposed organisation within IFLA might adopt. It will end by making a formal proposal. It has a secondary function in that it will serve as a preliminary focus to generate ideas that might be of assistance to those planning the Leipzig 1981 Council and Conference on the theme, "The role, tasks and methods of national bodies with regard to national library planning and international library co-operation".

An examination of IFLA activities since the adoption in 1976 of the Statutes would, as I have indicated, show a new and dynamic organisation with a number of activities to its credit. A globally-expanding organisation with increasing membership, capable through its democratic structure of using to the full the reservoir of resources, expertise, skills and knowledge that is available from the individuals in membership of the associations and institutions themselves in membership of IFLA. It has successfully harnessed these resources, under the law of the Statutes and using the machinery of the 139 national organisations and the institutional organisations in its membership as well as the national machinery established to co-ordinate a country's input and that of its librarians into IFLA's activities, to meet its stated objectives.

Yet one objective and associated activity is missing. This is an objective and activities concerned with the library associations themselves, even though they are the machinery which makes possible the activities of IFLA itself. If there is any criticism of the new IFLA it is that the activities of the national library associations, their concerns and considerations and their overall significance have been subordinated within IFLA to a concern for the improvement of library and information science practices. That this subordination during the settling-in period after the adoption of the new statutes was correct is not in

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doubt. Too much time in the world of library and information systems and the library associations themselves is spent gazing at our own navels; looking at how best we might solve a problem concerned with library practice, or in efforts to meet standards of practice, or criteria or expectations. IFLA has not allowed this to happen. It has looked instead at the outside world and responded to the needs it identified there.

What, however, are the needs of IFLA's own internal world - the world of the library associations themselves? Explained simply, it is to provide a focus not for the considerations of library practices but for the national library associations around the world to meet to consider problems and matters of common interest. It is for IFLA to show concern and provide a forum for the opinion and resolution of some of the issues that face these associations. Of course, national associations have their own particular problems, many of which are closely related to the societies, cultures and political systems of which they are a part. There are, however, large numbers of problems that are common to most, if not all, associations. A problem's resolution may need to be different because of the differences in societies but that does not negate the need to provide a situation in which the wheel need not be invented independently every time a solution to a problem is required. Incidentally, not to solve them is to endanger their very existence and for them to die is to threaten the very basis and foundation of IFLA itself. It is not, therefore, in IFLA's best interests to ignore the needs of these associations.

Let us look at their needs. They are, at their simplest, concerned with administration and management: the management of the resources, human and financial, in national library associations required to assist to execute policy. The needs are concerned with the provision of opportunities to make more effective and efficient the management of national library associations.

Let us turn first to the needs of those in the industrialised world. The problems that concern them can be considered in the five main categories that arise from the five main objectives of a professional organisation, namely: activities necessary to protect the public using the members' professional services; the promotion of professional activities in various areas of practice; reaction to members' concerns; the organisation and administration of the association; to operate as a pressure group on behalf of library and information services. In the first category, for instance, an association function would be to protect the interests of the users of library and information services as exemplified in the preparation and implementation of a code of professional ethics. In the second category an example might be the problems with which associations are concerned involving the relationship of practitioners with the schools undertaking the education and training of potential entrants to the profession. Also in this second category of services to members could be included problems concerned with such issues as decisions affecting subscriptions, for instance the advantages and disadvantages of salary-related subscriptions or related to "banding" salary-related subscriptions. In countries suffering from inflation there are advantages and disadvantages to be considered of inflation-linked subscriptions. Continuing in this category are the problems of providing services to members that are often costly and that have to be financed from a relatively meagre subscription-based income. Related to this example is one in the category of the organisation and administration of associations: namely the conflicts that require resolution in publishing programmes between the need to disseminate information to members, employers, parent organisations and to users of library services and the need to publish for profit in order to off-set the costs of members' services and professional activities. At the level of Elected Members of Associations' governing bodies there are sometimes conflicts when they happen to be Chiefs of library systems and yet have to represent views of association members who elected them who are non-chiefs. A related problem concerns associations

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that have in membership individuals as well as institutions. Conflicts often arise between their differing needs particularly when institutional needs are heavy consumers of resources and time as in the preparation of representation to government ministers. Conflicts can also arise during policy formulation between what is expected professionally of individual members and what is unacceptable to employers who may be institutional members. An example would be the unfettered dissemination of information in community information programmes in public libraries and possible restrictions on information provision by an employing authority. Nearer to the centre of IFLA's concerns are the problems of encouraging individual members to a greater understanding of the fast-increasing internationalism of library and information services and the significance of international work generally and of IFLA's own work in relation to members' local concerns and local library practices. As pressure groups for libraries associations have problems in some countries connected with the multiplicity of organisations within the profession in individual countries resulting in divided views and representations that nationally and internationally only weaken the voice of practicing library and information workers. Improvements in this should be one of highest priority. A look at other groups of professionals - the law, accountants, architects, engineers, the military - and one sees how strong, influential and effective are their professional organisations and their professions. Strong because of the central and significant function of their professional activities in society. In contrast one looks at the relatively weak position of librarians, who should, as suppliers of information, documents and services to these professionals, be in a far more influential position in society, and as a consequence better rewarded, than they are. It is an activity that needs orchestrating from a central focal point. Additional organisational problems relate to membership recruitment and development, to the organisation of conferences, to relations with Government and to the development of publishing programmes.

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All problems, it is suggested, that have rarely been before IFLA as an organisation and certainly not since the adoption of the new Statutes.

Similar concerns worry associations in the developing world but in addition they have even more basic and difficult matters with which to grapple. It is not inappropriate here to point out the importance of their problems being given particular attention here when for the first time the IFLA Conference is meeting in a developing country. Their concerns are with the very basic problem of establishing the concept of professionalism and from it forging a professional body from individual practicing librarians. Often the territories covered by the membership are large and communications poor. Travel is difficult and expensive. Librarians are relatively poorly paid and attendance at Conferences, travel to meetings and even the payment of subscriptions impose financial strains. In those circumstances, how does one begin to combine together a corpus of interested and dedicated librarians, and yet without such a body how can librarians effectively argue with government from a collectively strong position for more money with which to develop services and improve conditions of service and salaries? Where energetic librarians exist, their time is often occupied in running their own libraries to provide a standard that many of their users have come to expect from education and training outside their own country. In addition their services often are in demand by Government in the form of advice and to represent library interests and they are even harder pressed when international organisations make similar claims. In addition to these difficulties officers are elected who sometimes prefer the kudos that the title of their office confers on them instead of earning respect from the activities that the office permits. In such circumstances, officers change frequently and without central and permanent headquarters the addresses for communication with the association changes, so that contact with it locally, nationally and internationally, becomes confused and difficult

It is not surprising that in some circumstances little progress is made.

Yet it is heartening to see where progress has been made. The effect on the development of library and information services generally and particularly those serving the general public has been dynamic. The creation of the West African Library Association (WALA) provides an excellent example of the way in which a relatively strong and young professional association was able to influence Governments towards enlightened library development. The division of WALA into the library associations of Nigeria, Ghana and Sierre Leone, although there were disadvantages, did much to improve and encourage public library development in those territories. The depressing picture of the reverse of that coin is of one nation where the profession is divided by geographical and state structures of Government so that each state has its own library association which is further sub-divided within states into followers of two particular classifications. In such situations the centre cannot hold and because of poor resources and the size of the country the profession has been relatively ineffective in pursuading Government of the importance of investing for library development.

In a paper on regional co-operation in developing countries at the Unesco pre-IFLA Seminar in Antwerp in 1977 on resource sharing, I suggested that international organisations, and particularly Unesco, might be better advised to invest some of the resources that they do in a variety of types of projects in developing countries by using the money and expertise to encourage the development of active and effective library associations. Expertise could be made available for relatively small financial investments to either help to establish associations in the developing countries currently without them or to improve the management of associations and to help to create strong central bodies with more permanent secretariats and offices with central and more fixed locations than is often possible at present. A similar proposal has been endorsed by the British National Committee for the

General Information Programme. Both the Inter-governmental Council and the Secretariat are reported to have received the proposal with some interest. A GIP report notes that various "new projects were suggested and mostly accepted by the Secretariat". The third of these projects reads as follows: "Support for the creation of professional associations in developing countries, where needed, both through general projects (guidelines, seminars, etc) and through projects in specific countries".

It is to consider such problems as those outlined above and to act as a pressure point within IFLA on Unesco and to assist Unesco's General Information Programme, (should such a suggestion to assist the developing countries be taken up), that IFLA needs to provide a national focus in which these matters can be considered.

The last part of this paper is to determine what would be an appropriate way to establish some permanent focus for these and other problems. What is required is for IFLA, because I would suggest nowhere else ought it to be formed, to provide a forum in which such matters can be considered. I am not suggesting that IFLA would interfere in the administration and management of any country's library association. At present it does not intervene in the administration and operation of Unesco or of national libraries or of schools of library science even though it is already involved with activities with which they are concerned. The forum's purpose could be concerned with the following.

(i) To act as a centre for the exchange of experience and to learn from each other's mistakes particularly, perhaps, those that have been made in the industrialised countries.

(ii) To provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experiences with regard to the implementation of IFLA resolutions and policies and in undertaking activities for IFLA.

(iii) To provide a reservoir from which advice can be given to help to resolve a particular problem in one association that has already been satisfactorily resolved in another.

(iv) For the developing countries in particular to act through the democratic machinery of IFLA to pressure international organisations, national governments and other professional associations to recognize the value and worth of encouraging the formation of strong library and information associations to assist the development of library and information services.

(v) To encourage the identification and adoption of improved management, organisational and methodological techniques and skills in the associations.

(vi) To assist to a greater understanding amongst national members of IFLA and international work.

(vii) Finally, to provide a focus on the work of national library associations within the context of IFLA's programmes.

The potential membership of such an organisation would be drawn from the 139 national association members and a small number of those eligible within the category of institutional members. Membership criteria should present no difficulties. What may be a problem will be to decide on the criteria for the selection of individuals within a national library association to represent it on the proposed IFLA body. There are many patterns of structure and organisation of national associations in membership of IFLA. They range from small executives of three or four officers holding executive and honorary posts and undertaking much work out of office hours in what can only be described as truly dedicated service and excellent examples of professional commitment. At the other

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end of the scale are the large relatively well-financed, well-staffed, full-time organisations such as the Canadian, American and British Library Associations. The bond that unites these disparate organisations are the common problems that their executives have to resolve. A criterion therfore for membership and participation in the work of any forum to be established within IFLA should be that the individual nominated to it should function in an executive capacity within the national association. He or she could be full-time and a paid officer in a large secretariat or alternatively could be a part-time officer. They can be officers elected by the membership into such posts as Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer undertaking their work from home unpaid and in their own spare time. The primary criterion should be that their most important function is not the formulation of policy but its exection - whether formulated by a Council, representing the membership at large or elsewhere.

It might be argued that other bodies within IFLA are already, to a greater or lesser degree, undertaking some of the functions with which this proposed focus might be concerned. Perhaps that which most readily comes to mind is the Round Table on National Centres for Library Services. Its terms of reference are: "To promote the co-operation between the members, the exchange of information on new developments or plans, the comparison of working-methods and results and the promotion of centralized services in other nations". These suggest that there is a very positive distinction betweeen the proposed body and the Round Table. The Round Table's main concerns are the provisions of goods and services to libraries for instance, catalogue cards, furniture, advice on building and design. It is only in a relatively small number of countries that the national library association is also responsible for these functions. It would not appear impossible to define objectives for the new organisation that would not overlap but would compliment those of the existing Round Table. It should not be forgotten also that the Chairman of the Round Table, Mr. Dick Reumer, in his report to his members in

Copenhagen stated: "People of national offices of library associations have specific interests and desires. However, these should not concern our Round Table. Perhaps it should be recommended that IFLA, and the Division of Libraries Serving the General Public in particular, take the initiative to set up a separate Round Table for this purpose".

At the beginning of this paper it was suggested that it would be useful to formulate a proposal which could serve as the basis for discussion and on which it might be possible to obtain some majority of agreement in order to assist the Professional and Executive Boards in their deliberations. The proposal is:

> that this meeting recommends to the Executive Board for its consideration and report to IFLA Council 1981, that a Round Table on the Management of Library Associations be established within IFLA. The purpose of the Round Table to be to provide a forum for those managing library associations, with the objectives of discussing common problems and improving the organisation and management of library associations to make them more effective. Its membership would be open to a representative responsible for executive functions from library associations and institutions in membership of IFLA.

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